

TWO GROUPIES

an original play by max sparber



First printing: April 6, 2006

Two Groupies, ©2006 Max Sparber. Some rights reserved, Copies of this script may be freely duplicated and distributed, but any productions of the play must be approved by the copyright holder. Since this publication of the script, additions or revisions may have been made. Updates, if available, can be found at Mr. Sparber's Web page: maxsparber.blogspot.com. Additional media regarding the play will also be available on the Web page.

SCENE ONE

A song plays: Terry Dene's "Crazy Little Girlie."

The set is a hotel room in Baltimore. It is a shabby, bland, anonymous box with a bed, a television, and several chairs. An exit in the back leads to an offstage bathroom. The year is 1965. The door to the hotel room opens and in spills GABBY, 21, arm in arm with a MOD. Gabby has blonde hair done up in a high beehive. Her lips are painted white, and she wears thick, raccoon-like eyeliner. She has on a stylish one-piece dress, black and yellow, featuring an op-art pattern. Gabby speaks with a Baltimorean accent.

The MOD wears a tight two-piece black suit, high black leather boots, and a mop of hair that partially covers his eyes. When he speaks, he has a distinctive Mancunian accent.

The music stops. Without saying a word or turning on the lights, Gabby pushes the mod over to the bed, pushes him down on it. He sits with his back to the audience and she kneels in front of him, unbuckling his pants. She fellates him. This should go on for a while, and should be both energetic and realistic.

The Mod comes. Gabby rises wordlessly and crosses to the bathroom, where we hear water running. The Mod lights a cigarette, repackages himself, and then turns on the light near the bed. He fishes around in his pockets for something.

MOD: *(Calling out)* Bring us some water, then, would you, love?

Gabby enters with a small paper cup filled with water, hands it to him.

MOD: Ta.

The Mod produces a handful of pills and swallows a few, washing them down with water. He wordlessly offers her some pills. She shrugs, takes a few, looking at them.

GABBY: What are they?

MOD: Brownies.

GABBY: My friend Midge took these once. She said they made her throw up.

MOD: Never happened, dear. Not with brownies.

GABBY: No?

MOD: Nah. She must have taken summit else. These is Benzadrine. A harmless kick is all. Me mum takes them. Diet pills, you know. Noffing to fear — a little kick is all.

GABBY: Okay. *(She swallows a pair of pills, sips water.)*

MOD: You see, love. Noffing to fear; I wouldn't turn you wrong.

GABBY: Yeah. So.

MOD: So?

GABBY: Should I go then?

MOD: Do you want to go?

GABBY: I could go or I could stay.

MOD: Well, why not stay, love? Have a fag with me.

He offers her a cigarette. She takes it, lights it, and sits down on the bed next to him, stretching out.

MOD: You a groupie, then?

GABBY: I suppose I am.

MOD: Right on. Gabby the Groupie. It's got a nice ring to it.

GABBY: You know, I never even heard that word before this year.

MOD: I hear one of the Rolling Stones came up with the word in Australia. Apparently birds was just tossing themselves at the Stones down there.

GABBY: Do you have groupies back in England?

MOD: Oh, yeah. They're pretty aggressive there. Chase you down the street an' all. It's a bit of a game, really. You know, we don't really mind getting caught, but we run away anyway. You're the first groupie I've met in America, though.

GABBY: You're not the first English musician I've met.

MOD: I guess not, eh?

GABBY: No. English musicians are my favorite. I was listening to English rock and roll before anybody else I even know of.

MOD: Yeah? Like who?

GABBY: Cliff Bennett. Cilla Black. Joe Brown.

MOD: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know them! I played with Cilla Black on *The 6.5 Special*! Who else?

GABBY: Johnny Kidd & the Pirates.

MOD: You're kidding me, mate! You know Johnny Kidd & The Pirates?

GABBY: I have a copy of "Linda Lu."

MOD: That's wild, man. I used to see him perform when I was a lad, before I ever even started a band. You're pretty hip, you know that?

GABBY: I just know what I like. I used to order all the English singles from the backs of music magazines. I was buying the Beatles before anybody in the United States ever heard of them.

MOD: Yeah, man, fab, really fab. So how did you get to be a groupie?

GABBY: I told you already: I just know what I like.

MOD: Right on. Well, Gabby, I like you right back. I always wanted to make it with an American bird.

GABBY: Where are you from? Not Liverpool, right?

MOD: No, man. I'm from Manchester.

GABBY: I've never done it with somebody from Manchester.

MOD: Oi, yeah, then! It's a first for the both of us!

GABBY: I think I'm starting to feel that pill you gave me.

MOD: Yeah? What you feeling, love?

GABBY: You know, I just feel ... jittery.

MOD: Well, that sounds right. I been taking them so long, I don't even remember what it feels like.

GABBY: No?

MOD: Nah. If I stop, though, I just crash. Like, days. Me mates can't even roust me for a show. I missed one in Hamburg about a year ago — the band had to go on as an instrumental act. It must have worked out all right for them, though. When I woke up, they were all with birds, balling them in the bed next to mine.

GABBY: Really?

MOD: I dunno what they did. Maybe played some trad jazz. Those Hamburg birds used to go mad for trad jazz. "Black and Tan Fantasy," "Coronation Rag," "Swanee River Boogie." My band started off playing trad, but I could never stand that noise. I turned them right around. *(He finishes his cigarette, stubs it out.)* Well, give us a kiss then.

Gabby kisses him.

MOD: Do you go for anything wild?

GABBY: Like what?

MOD: I dunno. What were the wildest thing you ever done?

GABBY: I balled two guys at once.

MOD: Really? I always wondered about that. I can't wrap me head around the logistics.

GABBY: I'd never done anything like it before. It was their idea.

MOD: No? When did you do it, love?

GABBY: A few weeks ago. I didn't care for it. The truth is, I think those guys were a couple of fairies. They kept kissing each other. I honestly think if I left the room they wouldn't have noticed.

MOD: Yeah? Who?

GABBY: Chad and Damon. You know them?

MOD: Oh, fuck me, you're kidding! That's too funny, mate!

GABBY: Why?

MOD: We tussled with them in York. They was throwing things at us in a pub. We were enjoying a few pints and what comes at us but paper airplanes, cocktail stirrers. Finally they threw an ashtray and we took it outside. Taught them a proper lesson, too.

GABBY: Well, now you know. They're fairies.

MOD: So what else you done?

GABBY: Why don't you tell me? You English are a bunch of pervs anyway.

MOD: We are?

GABBY: Oh, yeah. I've heard stories.

MOD: Like what?

GABBY: I heard there was a girl in Boston. The band kept sticking things up in her, like cucumbers and coke bottles, just to see what they could fit. I heard she had to go to a hospital.

MOD: Really?

GABBY: Really! Tell me that's not sick!

MOD: How big a cucumber?

GABBY: You see! How big a cucumber? What kind of question is that? Sicko.

MOD: Well, I heard about an American girl that you could get an entire fist up inside her.

GABBY: What! Bullshit!

MOD: I swear to you, love. She's legendary.

GABBY: Bullshit! It's not possible.

MOD: I dunno. You've got to get a baby out of there, right? A fist is smaller than a baby.

GABBY: Well, I guess so. But it seems like it would hurt like hell.

MOD: They say she likes it. So who are you to call the English sickos?

GABBY: Well, I've never done anything like that!

MOD: Well, I ain't eivver, have I?

GABBY: You didn't answer my question, though.

MOD: What question?

GABBY: What's the wildest thing you've ever done?

MOD: Oh, right. I stuck my fist up a girl once.

GABBY: Stop it!

MOD: Made her into a regular puppet, I did.

GABBY: Stop it! Tell the truth!

MOD: I guess me an' the band all went wif this one girl in Bristol. She was a regular looker, and we couldn't decide which one of us would have her, so we took turns. Afterwards, she got us all to autograph a copy of our record for her.

GABBY: That's not that wild.

MOD: Well, give us half a chance, would you! We've only had one single in the Top 10! Look me up next time we're in Baltimore and maybe I'll have some more stories for you.

GABBY: All right, it's a date. Give us a kiss then. *(The Mod kisses Gabby.)*

MOD: Why don't you get your kit off and we'll give it anovver go?

Gabby nods. She stands up. She pulls her dress off, takes off her bra.

MOD: Hold on a moment, love.

GABBY: What is it?

MOD: You're my first American bird. I'd like to look at you for a moment, if it's all right.

GABBY: It's all right.

MOD: *(The Mod whistles.)* All right love. Let's get this started. I could ball a girl like you all night.

Gabby reaches over and turns off the lamp. She climbs into bed.

SCENE TWO

A song plays: “Yeh Yeh” by Georgie Fame. The lights onstage are dim, but two figures, Gabby and MIDGE, age 21, can be seen go go dancing in place in the half-light. They smoke cigarettes and move somewhat drunkenly.

The lights rise. Midge wears cats-eye glasses and has a Cleopatra haircut. Both girls wear go go boots and miniskirts.

The hotel door opens and two SCOUSE MUSICIANS enter, both dressed in black suits, skinny ties, and porkpie hats. One carries several bottles with him, and he shakes them like maracas. The Scouse musicians join the girls in dancing.

MUSICIAN ONE: Getting the party started without us, eh?

MUSICIAN TWO: We brings enough hooch to get completely parlatic. Have a bevvvy, eh?

Musician two disappears into the bathroom, comes back a moment later with paper cups, He opens one of the bottles, pours drinks.

MUSICIAN TWO: What a naff fucking town this is! Do you know what a complete headache it was for us to buy these bottles? Ain't noffing open on Sunday nights! We had to talk some old spook coffin dodger into selling us these from right off his porch. Maybe he gives us virgin's piss for all we know.

MUSICIAN ONE: Oh, well, give us a scoop, mate. I'd suck der sweat from a docker's armpits.

MUSICIAN TWO: *(Holding drinks out to girls.)* Ladies. *(They stare at him blankly.)* You don't understand half a what I'm saying, do you?

GABBY: No. But I like listening to you.

MUSICIAN TWO: Well, have a drink with us too.

The girls take the drinks.

MIDGE: We love your accents.

MUSICIAN TWO: We ain't got accent, do we? It's you two birds what talk funny.

MUSICIAN ONE: Oi! Ain't that the truth! Here, say this: "I'm going down to the ocean this weekend."

MIDGE: I'm going down to the ocean this weekend.

MUSICIAN ONE: Now you.

GABBY: I'm going down to the ocean this weekend.

MUSICIAN ONE: *(Imitating.)* Ocean. Ocean.

MUSICIAN TWO: Ocean. I can't do it.

GABBY: C'mon. We don't have an accent!

MUSICIAN ONE: Well, I reckon nobody thinks they've got an accent. It's everybody else what speaks oddly, innit?

MUSICIAN TWO: Yeah. We likes listening to you two birds. Tell us summit.

GABBY: Like what?

MUSICIAN TWO: How do you two know each other?

GABBY: We work together.

MIDGE: We sell makeup.

GABBY: Yeah. Makeup and perfume.

MIDGE: At the May Department Store. We never even knew each other before we started working together.

GABBY: Which is funny, because we went to the same middle school.

MIDGE: Robert Poole.

GABBY: But I transferred there my senior year because we moved to Hampdon from Fells Point, and Midge was gone for most of her senior year. So we never even saw each other when we were in school.

MUSICIAN ONE: Why was you gone from school that year, Midge?

MIDGE: Health problems. I had to do all my homework at home and have my brother bring it in to school for me, and I had to have tutors come to the house and teach me my lessons.

MUSICIAN ONE: What kind of health problems, Midge?

MIDGE: I was pregnant.

There is an uncomfortable quiet for a moment, then everyone spontaneously starts laughing. Musician two holds up his cup to Midge.

MUSICIAN TWO: Well, you shut us up, didn't you, Midge? You got a puddin in yer oven right early. Here's to you.

MUSICIAN ONE: Right. Bumps to you, love!

MIDGE: Well, I won't make that mistake again. Gabby found us a doctor to get us the pill.

MUSICIAN ONE: Aye, the pill! I've heard about that! You can have just oodles of woo and not have to worry

about the stork coming, right? Aye, that's pretty fab, my pretties.

MIDGE: Oodles of woo?

MUSICIAN ONE: Yeah, you know. Playin' put 'n' take, yeah?

MUSICIAN TWO: Rumpy pumpy. To block. You know? What do you birds call it?

MIDGE: Ball.

MUSICIAN ONE: Yeah, yeah, we've heard that one. What else?

GABBY: Submarine races.

MUSICIAN TWO: Ha! What else?

GABBY: Doing it. Um, screwing. Getting laid.

MIDGE: Hanky panky. Um, nookie.

GABBY: Make piggies.

MIDGE: Um ... fuck.

MUSICIAN ONE: Yeah, we already know that last one too. What did they used to call it in Hamburg?

MUSICIAN TWO: Bumsen. Ich bin bumsen?

MUSICIAN ONE: Sie bumsen gutes!

MUSICIAN TWO: Ich bumse alle Mädchen!

MUSICIAN ONE: Yeah, couldn't say that in Liverpool, could we, mate? The birds there wouldn't give us a second look, would they?

MIDGE: Liverpool?

MUSICIAN TWO: Oh, here we go. You had to mention Liverpool, didn't you?

MIDGE: Here we go with what?

MUSICIAN TWO: The Beatles questions. You know, we were the house band at the Cat a Coombs while those lads was still in their short pants.

MUSICIAN ONE: Yeah, man. We was on the German charts while they was still calling themselves The Quarrymen. Or, what was it?

MUSICIAN TWO: The Doggies?

MUSICIAN ONE: The Moondogs? Johnny and the Moondogs?

MUSICIAN TWO: We was the headliners on Operation Big Beat back in 1961. Wasn't nobody even heard of the Beatles three years ago. You know, the yanks laughed at them last year when they was played on the telly. Nobody in this country ever bought a Beatles album until this year.

MIDGE: Gabby did.

GABBY: I did. I bought the "Please Please Me" single three years ago.

MIDGE: Gabby also had your album last year, as soon as it came out.

MUSICIAN ONE: Yeah? Is that true, Gabby?

GABBY: I bought your single in 1962 too. I had to have it shipped from overseas.

MUSICIAN ONE: Well, Lord love a duck. Maybe we have our first yank fan here, mate.

MUSICIAN TWO: Hey, yeah! I think I remember! We put out that single, and Sam Leach told us we had sold one to the United States!

MUSICIAN ONE: We sold a few to the States, didn't we?

MUSICIAN TWO: No.

MUSICIAN ONE: I was sure we had.

MUSICIAN TWO: No, you binhead. We only ever sold 300 copies of that record in England. Do you think we was shipping them all overseas?

MUSICIAN ONE: It sold well in Hamburg.

MUSICIAN TWO: Yeah, 300 in England, 2,000 in Hamburg, and one copy in the United States. This is her, mate. This is the yank what bought us.

MUSICIAN ONE: Well, that makes me just want to kiss you, Gabby. You wouldn't scream if I give you a little peck?

GABBY: No.

Musician one leans over and kisses Gabby on the cheek.

MUSICIAN ONE :Oh, ta!

MUSICIAN TWO: And one for me.

He leans over and kisses Gabby on the cheek.

MUSICIAN ONE: So what was the matter with you, Midge? Our music not good enough for you?

MIDGE: I love your music. Gabby and I bought the first tickets for your show at the Civic Center.

GABBY: We took the bus out at 5 in the morning so we could be there when the box office opened. We didn't even do that when the Beatles were here.

MIDGE: Of course, we didn't know they would sell out.

MUSICIAN ONE: Well, that's what we like. True fans.

MUSICIAN TWO: In fact, could I ask you to come with me to the dubs, Gabby?

GABBY: The dubs?

MUSICIAN TWO: *(Gestures to bathroom.)* The privy.

GABBY: Why?

MUSICIAN TWO: It's a secret. I'll tell you when we get there.

GABBY: All right.

Gabby exits with Musician two. They cross to the bathroom, and musician two closes the door behind him. Musician one and Midge stand in silence for a moment.

MUSICIAN ONE: I knew Ringo when he was a lad, you know.

MIDGE: Really?

MUSICIAN ONE: We lived near each other in Dingle. He was a few years younger than me, and I remember he was always in and out of the hospital.

MIDGE: Maybe he was pregnant.

MUSICIAN ONE: Ha! You know, I played guitar in his skiffle band for a few weeks, even. We used to get drinks in Hamburg. He was right friendly, he was. This was before he was a Beatle.

Moans come from the bathroom, and a bumping noise.

MIDGE: He's my favorite Beatle.

MUSICIAN ONE: We thought he was a Jew. Because of his nose, you know. We used to call him Richie Dickie Docker.

MIDGE: Richie Dickie Docker?

MUSICIAN ONE: Yeah, it's Liverpool slang. It means, like, "Rabbi Ritchie." But I didn't care one way or the other if he was a Jew or wasn't. He was always a gent, always real friendly to the lads from the old neighborhood. I'm glad for his success. I really am.

MIDGE: Hey.

MUSICIAN ONE: What?

MIDGE: What are you, shy?

MUSICIAN ONE: What? Why?

MIDGE: Are you ever going to get around to kissing me? You were so quick to kiss Gabby.

She presses in close to him and he kisses her.

MUSICIAN ONE: You know something? When we was out scrounging the potcheen, we talked about which of you birds we wanted to end up with. You know I picked you?

MIDGE: You know I picked you too?

She pulls him by his shirt, back toward the bed.

SCENE THREE

A song plays: “Time for You” by Sounds Incorporated. The hotel door opens and Midge enters, wrapped in a clear plastic raincoat and wearing a stiff, ultra-mod felt cap. She pauses and poses, and, from outside, a flashbulb snaps.

A LONDON BASSIST enters, dressed in tight, heavily pattered pants and a black turtleneck, wearing black wraparound shades, and holding a camera. He snaps another picture of Midge, who poses playfully.

MIDGE: Well, I almost made a mistake I would have regretted.

BASSIST: What’s that?

MIDGE: I almost sent you away last night.

BASSIST: Why?

MIDGE: *(Coyly.)* I don’t know. Maybe I didn’t think you were my type.

BASSIST: What is your type?

MIDGE: You know ... Chart-toppers. I thought about heading out to another club and seeing if Gerry and the Pacemakers were there.

BASSIST: Oh, I see how it is. It’s top-10 or nothing for you.

MIDGE: A girl’s got to have her standards, don’t she?

BASSIST: So what changed your mind?

MIDGE: I don’t know. You’re cute. And you looked at me with those puppy dog eyes and said, “I don’t want to be alone tonight.” Well, my heart just melted. Who knows, maybe you’ll be in the Top-10 soon, and I can say I knew him when.

BASSIST: *(Playfully.)* Well, you certainly profited from your decision, didn’t you?

MIDGE: *(Posing in a way that shows off her clothes.)* These? Yes, you were a darling to buy them for me, weren’t you? Now I’ve got simply the most mod wardrobe in Baltimore!

BASSIST: Yes. Imagine what I could have bought you if I had an album in the Top-10.

MIDGE: Well, if your band goes number one with a bullet, you’ll have to look me up again, won’t you?

BASSIST: Do the other lads give you things?

MIDGE: If they want to. You know, I really don’t expect it. But it’s nice to be surprised. One fella paid off three months of my rent.

BASSIST: A chart-topper, I presume.

MIDGE: Yes, with money to burn, apparently. But don't pout, darling. I like your present better. I've had a fab day, wandering around, showing off my new clothes, getting my photo taken. Will you show your photos off when you get back home and say, "This is my American lover"?

BASSIST: Maybe I'll try to get them published. I'm doing a whole photo series of my tour of America.

MIDGE: Really?

BASSIST: Yeah. I didn't start out to be in a band, you know. It really started off as something of a lark. I trained to play the classical cello, after all. Who knows how long this little musical adventure will last, after all? And what do I do afterward?

MIDGE: Take photographs?

BASSIST: I'd like to. I studied photography at Bromley Technical High School for Boys. I always dug it. Maybe tomorrow I'll wander around town and photograph some negroes. We don't play in Pittsburgh until Wednesday, after all, and I have to do something with my time.

MIDGE: You could spend it with me.

BASSIST: Don't you have work?

MIDGE: I'll call in sick.

BASSIST: Blimey. You'd take a holiday for me? What would you do if I had a number one single?

MIDGE: Just about anything you asked.

BASSIST: Would you allow me to shoot some nude studies of you?

MIDGE: Yes.

BASSIST: I'd like that.

MIDGE: Write a hit song.

BASSIST: Rotter. Is there some sort of compromise we can make?

MIDGE: Maybe.

BASSIST: Maybe?

MIDGE: How about this: I'll take off mine if you'll take off yours.

BASSIST: And I can take pictures?

MIDGE: If I can too.

BASSIST: What? Of me?

MIDGE: Yes. Even Steven. And you have to go first.

BASSIST: But you've got more clothes on than I do! I'll be in my birthday suit before you even get down through your first layer.

MIDGE: Well, let's make is simple. I'll tell you what I want you to take off, and you tell me what you want me to take off. Does that sound fair?

BASSIST: All right.

MIDGE: Your pants.

BASSIST: My trousers first? Say, you get straight to the point, don't you?

MIDGE: I don't believe in wasting time. Take them off, mac.

The bassist slips out of his pants, revealing bikini-style underwear and knee-high socks..

MIDGE: Give me your camera.

BASSIST: How do you want me to pose? *(Takes a heroic stance.)* How's this?

MIDGE: *(Laughing.)* Ridiculous. I love it. *(Midge snaps a photo. The bassist takes several more poses, and Midge photographs them.)* You think these will be in your book?

BASSIST: No. But I'll have some copies printed, sign them, and hand them out to fans. Wouldn't that be funny?

MIDGE: Hilarious!

BASSIST: All right, give me the camera. *(Midge him the camera, begins removing her top.)* Hey, I didn't tell you what I wanted you to take off!

MIDGE: *(Pausing.)* All right. What should I take off?

BASSIST: No, you guessed right.

MIDGE: I thought so.

Midge removes her top, stripping down to her bra. Then she puts her clear raincoat back on.

MIDGE: How do I look?

BASSIST: Ravishing.

MIDGE: Oh! Flatterer!

BASSIST: Take a pose.

She does so, and he snaps a few photos of her.

MIDGE: All right. Take it off.

BASSIST: Take what off.

MIDGE: *(Pointing at his underwear.)* Whatever that awful thing is. Get it off.

BASSIST: So pushy. It just so happens I bought these in France.

MIDGE: Well, they do make lovely women's underthings there.

BASSIST: These aren't for women! They're men's undergarments!

MIDGE: I don't want to discuss them, I want to see you get out of them.

BASSIST: All right. I reckon it's nothing you didn't see last night, eh?

He pulls his underwear off and stand bottomless, looking sheepish. Midge eyes him, nodding.

MIDGE: Yes, I think that'll make a very nice photo. Give me the camera.

He hands her back the camera. Midge holds it up to her eye, and then lowers it again, surprised.

MIDGE: Wait a second. Your thingy!

BASSIST: My thingy?

MIDGE: Were you circumcised last night?

BASSIST: Well, I don't think I'd be walking now if I were circumcised last night, would I?

MIDGE: I mean, I didn't notice. It's unusual for English men, isn't it?

BASSIST: Well, I'm a Jew, aren't I?

MIDGE: Are you?

BASSIST: Yes.

MIDGE: I didn't think there were that many Jews in England.

BASSIST: Oh, you'd be surprised. There's a lot of us in London. Jews basically run English fashion. My father has a tailor's shop on Carnaby Street.

MIDGE: Well, that explains why you're so good to shop with.

BASSIST: Yeah, well, I'm not interested in your clothes just now. Get it off.

MIDGE: Get what off?

BASSIST: Don't be coy with me, little lady. I'm not going to stand here with my lolly lick hanging out and let you keep your brassiere on. Take it off.

MIDGE: Now who's pushy? *(She removes her coat, bra, strikes a cheesecake pose.)* Will this do?

BASSIST: Nicely, I think. Camera please.

She hands him the camera, and the Bassist takes several photographs.

MIDGE: When you publish these, do me a favor and run a little black bar across my eyes, like they do in crime magazines.

BASSIST: You afraid you'll be recognized?

MIDGE: No, I just think it looks neat.

BASSIST: So, tell me something.

MIDGE: What?

BASSIST: Why is it you go for English bands?

MIDGE: Are you complaining?

BASSIST: No. I'm just curious.

MIDGE: Well, I like the music, for one thing. I mean, look at what's on the radio right now. "And Roses and Roses" by Andy Williams? "Dawn of Correction" by The Spokesmen? Dean Martin? Ugh!

BASSIST: Well, you have to admit, there's some good American music too.

MIDGE: I guess. It just doesn't seem as exciting to me.

BASSIST: Because all of us English musicians grew up listening to American music, you know.

MIDGE: Yeah. Well, it's not all about the music. Boys from Baltimore just seem so boring, they all seem like their stuck back in the 1950s, with their greasy hair, listening to Elvis and dancing to Chubby Checker. It's so backward -- so provincial. You know, I'd like to get out and see the world some time. I've actually thought about becoming an airline stewardess, because they get to travel for free.

BASSIST: So you're a groupie because you want to travel?

MIDGE: *(Laughing.)* Sort of! It's like every week I get to visit England without ever having to leave Baltimore!

BASSIST: And what do other people think about the fact that your with another bandmember every weekend?

MIDGE: Oh, Jesus Christ, I don't care what they think. I'm sure they think I'm some sort of a tramp. Who cares? People have such small minds. You know, men actually brag about how many chicks they've balled, and yet it's wrong if a woman does the same thing. I mean, fuck it, man, that double standard just makes me furious.

BASSIST: I can tell.

MIDGE: You know, I'd like to find the man who invented the pill and write him a thank you card. Because if I see a cute boy and I want to take him to bed, I can, and I don't have to worry about getting pregnant. And I'll tell you something, man. You think girls don't like to ball?

BASSIST: They do, don't they?

MIDGE: They fucking love it, even if they won't admit it. And it's not like I'll screw just anybody. And I won't screw somebody just because they're English, or because they're in a band.

BASSIST: No. They have to have a Top-10 hit, don't they?

MIDGE: No, I was kidding about that. I have to really like them, and I have to find them really attractive. You know, I turned down Brian Jones.

BASSIST: Really?

MIDGE: Yeah. He was just too aggressive. I went home and got a good night's sleep that night, and I was perfectly happy about the fact. People think you'll ball just anybody with a record contract and an accent because you're a groupie, but it's not true. I think I'm actually pretty particular.

BASSIST: Well, you know, you're making me feel pretty good about myself.

MIDGE: Am I?

BASSIST: Hey, you picked me over Brian Jones.

MIDGE: Say, I guess I did. You must be pretty special at that. Usually I don't look twice at somebody who hasn't at least cracked the Top-30.

She crosses to him, kisses him.

BASSIST: You know, I'd also like to find the inventor of the pill and send him a thank you card.

SCENE FOUR

A song plays: "Girls, Girls, Girls" by The Fourmost. As the song plays, the stage is dimly lit, and Midge and Gabbie repeatedly enter and exit the hotel room, singly, in pairs, in groups, where they simulate increasingly depraved couplings. Their activity should be hinted at, but, at the same time, not be stylized -- the audience should get the sense that, were the stage lights to be fully lit, they would be witnessing shocking acts of pornography.

When the song fades, the lights rise, revealing Gabbie and Midge reclining on the bed, unkempt, exhausted, unkempt, clothes untucked, giggling, in the middle of conversation.

GABBY: I'm telling you, she tested positive for the clap! He's spreading it to everybody!

MIDGE: No! Still, he's a pretty good kisser.

GABBY: Ew. You should get tested!

MIDGE: I didn't do anything else with him.

GABBY: It's a good idea, anyway. These guys all share girls. If he has it, you know a few of the rest of them do.

MIDGE: Did you get tested?

GABBY: Yes I did.

MIDGE: And?

GABBY: I'm clean. But, you know, the doctor said social diseases are way up.

MIDGE: God damn it. What is it, a blood test?

GABBY: Piss in a cup.

MIDGE: Oh, well, that's not so bad.

GABBY: Seriously, get checked out. I mean, it's not just clap that's going around. A lot of girls are turning up with the pox.

MIDGE: With what?

GABBY: Syphilis. You know, they call it The English Disease. I had an uncle once that got syphilis abroad when he was in the navy, and he didn't find out for years, and he went blind from it.

MIDGE: What if I have it?

GABBY: Honey, they can cure it with a few shots of penicillin.

MIDGE: Gah. Maybe I should make the guys wear protection.

GABBY: *(Laughing.)* You know that's not going to happen.

MIDGE: Well, there's nothing for it, then. I have to give up balling. *(Both laugh.)* I hate to do it. I really hate to. I'm going to miss it.

GABBY: Yeah, what are you even going to do with your weekends?

MIDGE: All I can figure on doing is joining a convent. Do you think they'll have me?

GABBY: Sure. I hear a lot of nuns are repentant sinners.

MIDGE: Well, then it's settled. Soon I'll be running around town with a yardstick, swatting anyone with a Beatle haircut or wearing white lipstick. I swear to God, if I see you with one of those English boys, I will punish you, Gabby.

GABBY: When are you going to do this?

MIDGE: I don't know. How much longer do we have on this room?

GABBY: It's rented out until noon on Tuesday, so we have a few days, according to the guys.

MIDGE: Well, I'll wait till Tuesday, then. I think I'll just sleep in. I'm fagged.

GABBY: Oh, you're fagged, are you?

MIDGE: What?

GABBY: You're starting to talk like them.

MIDGE: Cor. *(Both laugh.)*

GABBY: So. Who has been your favorite so far?

MIDGE: I don't know. Do you have a favorite?

GABBY: I have a favorite region. It's funny, I like the music from Northern England the best, because I've always been partial to Merseybeat, but all my favorites in the bed have been from London.

MIDGE: Why do you think that is?

GABBY: I don't know. Coincidence?

MIDGE: I would say my favorite region has been the West Country. They just seem so civil.

GABBY: I've started to tell where bands are from just by hearing their accents. I think I can even tell what part of London boys are from. Or, you know, if they're Cockneys. I went to *The Ipswich File* last week.

MIDGE: Oh? How is it?

GABBY: It's great. But I was listening to Michael Caine talk, and, you know, everybody behaves like he's so sophisticated, but halfway through the movie I realized, oh my God, he's a Cockney. He was probably, you know, really poor when he grew up.

MIDGE: Sometimes I think we're the only two girls in Baltimore who notice things like that. Sometimes I feel like, if we were to fly to, say, Liverpool tomorrow, we could probably get around without even having to ask for a map or get directions or anything. You know what I mean?

GABBY: Yeah! I was thinking almost exactly the same thing! I've heard so much about some of these places that sometimes I dream I'm there. Like I'll walk into a hat shop in London and say, "Hello, Georgie," because I already know the guy behind the counter. Of course, I was interested in England before any of those other girls.

MIDGE: I know! None of them probably ever heard of any of these bands before The Beatles, and there they are at the shows, running up to the front of the stage and screaming and fainting. It's like, how can you feel so passionate about a band that you only first heard two months ago?

GABBY: It's why I'm getting kind of sick of being called a groupie. Those other girls are groupies. They're only interested in the fame, you know? For me, it's always been about the music.

MIDGE: Honestly. I mean, you turned me on to a lot of this stuff a year or two ago, and I feel like I've known about it forever compared to a lot of other girls. And they're all just kids! It seems like every time we go to a show, it's just filled with 15-year-olds!

GABBY: I know!

MIDGE: I don't want to be associated with those girls! They just scream all the way through the show!

GABBY: It's terrible! You can't even hear the music!

MIDGE: I don't want the band members to think we're just a couple of teenagers like everybody else. Honestly, I don't want to be associated with those other girls.

GABBY: Well, you know, it's not like we're totally unknown to the bands.

MIDGE: What?

GABBY: I saw Tony Crane in a club a few weeks ago and I went up to him and he asked me if I was Gabby the Groupie.

MIDGE: He's already heard about you?

GABBY: Yeah! He said that he had been told he should look me up when he got to town. He said Gabby and Midge are sort of legendary.

MIDGE: He knew my name too!

GABBY: Yeah! I told him we weren't groupies though. He asked me what we were.

MIDGE: What did you tell him?

GABBY: I said we were patrons of the arts. I told him we were connoisseurs of fine music. And then I didn't go back to his hotel room with him, just to teach him a lesson.

MIDGE: Good for you.

GABBY: I'll probably look him up next time he comes to town, though. He's very cute.

MIDGE: Yeah, he is. Although he's from Liverpool, not London, so he might be disappointing.

GABBY: Yeah, well, maybe he can teach those London bands a thing or two and bring glory back to Northern England.

MIDGE: I have to use the ladies room, but I'm too tired to walk across the room.

GABBY: Well, you're not going in the bed.

MIDGE: I wish I still had some of those pills.

GABBY: What pills?

MIDGE: What do they call them? Brownies?

GABBY: I thought those make you throw up!

MIDGE: Well, yes. But they wake me up, too.

Midge rises, crosses sleepily to the bathroom.

MIDGE: I'm going to leave the door open so we can talk. Don't look in, Gabby.

GABBY: Oh, don't worry.

Midge crosses into the offstage toilet. She leaves the door open, calling out from offstage.

MIDGE: You know, Gabby, maybe we should go to England some time.

GABBY: Like, take a trip?

MIDGE: Yes. You know, save up money, travel around for a few weeks. Wouldn't that be fun?

GABBY: God, yes.

MIDGE: I mean, don't you just want to get out of Baltimore sometimes?

GABBY: All the time. I've actually thought about moving away.

MIDGE: You have? To where?

GABBY: I don't know. New York, maybe.

MIDGE: Jeez. What would you do there?

GABBY: I don't know, but what are we going to do here in Baltimore? Keep working at the department store? Eventually get married and have kids? I'm not interested.

MIDGE: You don't want to get married and have kids?

GABBY: No! Do you?

MIDGE: I don't know. I think about it sometimes. Maybe not here in Baltimore, and, you know, not this year or the next. But sometime.

GABBY: You going to tell your future husband about your experiences?

MIDGE: What experiences? (*Gabby is silent.*) Oh, *these* experiences. I suppose I would have to.

GABBY: Well, good luck finding a man who will understand.

MIDGE: Do you think? I mean, I already have a strike against me.

GABBY: What?

MIDGE: The baby. But, you know, fuck them if they can't handle the truth. I don't want to marry some jerk whose looking for a virgin bride. God, how boring!

GABBY: Well, I suppose that there may be a man out there somewhere who won't care that you already had a baby, but I think men will get a little jealous when they find out you've balled, like, six hundred men.

Midge emerges from the toilet, arms crossed. She crosses back to the bed.

MIDGE: (*Peevishly.*) Gabby!

GABBY: What?

MIDGE: I haven't balled six hundred men! Jesus Christ! It's nowhere near that number!

GABBY: So how many?

MIDGE: You tell me first.

GABBY: I don't keep count.

MIDGE: Guess.

GABBY: Maybe ... 15.

MIDGE: Oh, honestly. I was talking about more than just this past year.

GABBY: There haven't been more than this past year.

MIDGE: What?

GABBY: Midge, I was a virgin until this year.

MIDGE: Are you kidding?

GABBY: No.

MIDGE: Really? I wouldn't have guessed. You always acted so experienced; I just figured you knew what you were doing.

GABBY: Yeah, well, I was ready. I was already on the pill and everything. Sometimes I feel like I'm more naïve than anyone realizes, though. You know, sometimes I'll be balling a guy, and I'll think, Jesus Christ, am I really doing this? It's still sometimes so new to me.

MIDGE: So who was your first?

GABBY: You wouldn't believe it.

MIDGE: Who!

Gabby leans forward and whispers in Midge's ear. Midge responds explosively.

MIDGE: You're kidding!

GABBY: No.

MIDGE: Bullshit!

GABBY: It's true, Midge.

MIDGE: Jesus. I thought you seemed a little quiet the night of the Beatles concert. Holy cow! You really are a connoisseur. What did he say?

GABBY: He was pretty drunk. I don't think he knew it was my first time. I didn't cry or anything.

MIDGE: Have you ever told anybody else?

GABBY: No.

MIDGE: Imagine if the other bands found out! They're already all so jealous of the Beatles!

GABBY: Well, enough about me. You've been at this longer than I have. How many has it been for you?

MIDGE: It's been 19. Total. I do keep count.

GABBY: Well, that's not that many, I suppose.

MIDGE: No?

GABBY: But I'd give up plans of being a nun. *(They laugh.)*

SCENE FIVE

A song plays: "5-4-3-2-1" by Manfred Mann. Again, the stage is dimly lit -- this time the figures on it are silhouettes. Midge stands near the bed, arguing mutely with a THIN MAN. He turns and slaps her, and then lunges at her, fists raised. The lights go out.

As the song fades, the lights come up again. Midge is seated on the bed, wrapped in a blanket, holding toilet paper to a bloodied nose. Across from her is a HOTEL DETECTIVE, an unprepossessing man in a suit and tie.

DETECTIVE: All right, miss. Let me tell you where we're at right now. The man who attacked you, the musician, we have him downstairs in the office. Now, obviously, he's very drunk. I assume he was drunk when you came to the room with him. Is that correct?

MIDGE: Yes.

DETECTIVE: Well, he's down there, and he's yelling at our staff. He's asking our staff if we know who he is. Of course we know who he is. We listen to the radio. But I told him that we don't care who he is. This hotel has had three presidents stay here while they were in Baltimore. We had Frank Sinatra stay here last year. He could be the king of jolly old England, and if he misbehaves in our hotel, we're going to lock him in an office with a hotel detective until we figure out what to do with him. All right?

MIDGE: Yes.

DETECTIVE: So that's what I'm here to do: To figure out just what to do with him. I understand he beat you up pretty badly.

MIDGE: Yes.

DETECTIVE: Did you know him before you and he came to this hotel?

MIDGE: No. We just met in a club tonight.

DETECTIVE: I understand you were arguing before he hit you. Can you tell me what you were arguing about?

MIDGE: It's stupid.

DETECTIVE: Tell me anyway.

MIDGE: We were arguing because I didn't want to do anything with him.

DETECTIVE: Anything ... ?

MIDGE: You know, anything having to do with sex.

DETECTIVE: If you don't mind my asking, why not?

MIDGE: I didn't like his attitude. He was too cocky. We had a few drinks together, and he was bragging to me about girls he'd been with, and what he had done with them, and he waved his hand at the

club and said, "I can have any girl here tonight if I wanted to." And I decided that there was at least one girl he wasn't going to have.

DETECTIVE: So why did you come back to the hotel with him?

MIDGE: Well, because ... you know ...

DETECTIVE: Because he's on the radio?

MIDGE: Yeah, I guess so. I don't even particularly care for his music. I shouldn't have come back with him. I guess I thought it might be fun to talk to him for a while. I'm thinking about going to England for a trip, and he's from Lancaster, and I've never met anybody from Lancaster before, and I thought he might be able to tell me a little about it. But he wasn't really interested in talking. As soon as we got in here, he started touching me and trying to make me kiss him, even though I had told him there wasn't going to be any hanky panky. When I told him no, he just went bananas.

DETECTIVE: That's when he started hitting you?

MIDGE: Yes.

DETECTIVE: Did he force himself on you?

MIDGE: He tried to. I guess I started screaming. One of his band mates came in and pulled him off of me, and the two of them got into a fight in the hallway.

DETECTIVE: And I understand we had a doctor look at you. Is that right?

MIDGE: Yes. A bloody nose. I'm going to have some bruises.

DETECTIVE: But nothing broken?

MIDGE: No.

DETECTIVE: Well, then, I have to ask you what you want to do. We could call the police for you if you wanted. Is that what you want to do?

MIDGE: I don't know.

DETECTIVE: Well, we have two things to consider if we are to call the police. The first thing is whether it would do any good or not. You're not particularly hurt. He's a guest in this town. He's a celebrity. And the police would want to talk to me, and I would have to tell them that you're not entirely unknown to this hotel.

MIDGE: What do you mean?

DETECTIVE: I mean that hotel staff has seen you here almost every weekend for a year, usually with a different man.

MIDGE: I don't understand how that matters.

DETECTIVE: Well, the police are going to say, here's a girl who goes to hotel rooms with strangers. Drunk strangers. Every week. Sooner or later something was going to happen. And here we've got this rock and roll star, and arresting him would mean a lot of publicity, and it would mean rescheduling his tour, which would cost thousands of dollars. And they're going to think, that's a lot to do for just a bloody nose and a few bruises. So they're probably not going to arrest him. They're probably going to end up giving him a stern lecture and letting him go, and then they're going to give you a stern lecture, and they're going to send you home, and they're going to tell you to keep your nose clean. You understand?

MIDGE: Yes.

DETECTIVE: But maybe it'll happen differently. Maybe they'll take a dim view of some English pop singer who thinks he can come into Baltimore and punch a local girl in the nose. Maybe they'll decide to arrest him anyway, just to make an example out of him. Within an hour, this hotel would be filled with reporters. Your face would be splashed on every television news station and every newspaper in the country. And everything would come out. The fact that you come to this hotel every week with another boy, that would come out. They buy you things, don't they?

MIDGE: Sometimes.

DETECTIVE: Gifts? Maybe they sometimes pay your rent?

MIDGE: Once.

DETECTIVE: I'm not judging you, but there are a lot of people out there who would take a dim view of this sort of behavior. And, of course, if this went to trial, you would have to show up to testify against him, and his lawyer, if he were good, would ask you on the stand about every detail of every moment you've ever spent with every boy you've ever met. And you would have to answer, because you'd be under oath. So you have to think about that in deciding what you want to do. That's one thing you have to consider.

MIDGE: What is the other thing?

DETECTIVE: What?

MIDGE: You said that there were two things I have to consider. What's the other one?

DETECTIVE: Oh. The other thing you have to consider is that this hotel has a reputation for discretion.

MIDGE: What do you mean?

DETECTIVE: I mean, I'll call the police if you like, but you won't be welcome at this hotel again. If we see you on the premises again, we would have you arrested for prostitution.

MIDGE: What?

DETECTIVE: I'm sorry about that, but this decision comes directly from the hotel's owner, and it's his call. We make a lot of money from these English musicians, and we don't want to do anything to discourage them. Now, I'll call the police anyway, if you like. I wouldn't blame you. I'm not

fond of men who hit women, and I would enjoy seeing this punk put on the hot plate for a while. But I thought you should know all the ramifications of calling the police, so you can make an informed decision.

MIDGE: I don't really want to call the police. I don't. I just don't like the idea that somebody can hit me and get away with it.

DETECTIVE: Well, there may be something we can do about that. I spent about an hour talking to his manager, and he's amenable to making a deal.

MIDGE: A deal?

DETECTIVE: Sure. He doesn't know that you don't want to call the cops. And he knows just how much it will cost if you do and they need to reschedule the tour. So he's willing to pay not to have that happen.

MIDGE: Pay? Do you mean, pay me money?

DETECTIVE: Yes I do. Apparently, this rock and roll star got into a fight in Jersey last week, and hurt a guy pretty badly, and they had to pay through the nose to keep it out of the press. From the sound of things, this musician is costing his record company a fortune in hush money. They're ready to make you an offer to hush up this little bloody nose.

MIDGE: So he can do whatever he wants, and the record company just pays to keep it quiet?

DETECTIVE: I know, I know. It's not fair. But, for now, you might as well get whatever justice you can for that bloody nose. You said you were thinking of taking a trip to England?

MIDGE: Yes.

DETECTIVE: This might just pay for that trip. So what do you say?

MIDGE: What do I say to what?

DETECTIVE: Do I go downstairs and make a deal with them? Do you take a trip to England?

MIDGE: Yes.

DETECTIVE: Good girl.

SCENE SIX

The stage is again half-lit. In the semi-darkness, Gabby can be seen. She sets up a portable record player, and plays a 45-single on it: "Julie on my Mind" Prince Buster. She sways happily to the song. A tall, lean figure WATCHES, languidly smoking a cigarette. As the song winds down, the lights rise.

The figure is a leathery FRENCHMAN dressed in a black turtleneck sweater. He nods approvingly.

FRENCHMAN: All right! Yes! He is Jamaican, no?

GABBY: Yes!

FRENCHMAN: I knew the French Ambassador to Jamaica. He told me he took a tour of a shantytown in Kingston. He learned to make a rum drink there called "Rude to Your Parents." He made some for us one night. Oh!

GABBY: What?

FRENCHMAN: Strong! I had such a headache the next day! They drink the rum at music parties. Trucks set up on street corners with generators and speakers and they plug record players in and play music all night long. The musician on your 45 -- what is his name?

GABBY: Prince Buster.

FRENCHMAN: He probably started out performing at these parties. How did you hear about him? Is he popular here in America?

GABBY: No. I heard the single in England. I was walking around in Camberwell and there were a group of West Indian negroes listening to the song. They saw me listening and they gave me their copy. I've been trying to buy everything from the Blue Beat label ever since. I usually have to order it from England. But that's not a problem. I've been ordering music from England for quite a long time now.

FRENCHMAN: Yes?

GABBY: Yeah. Every time I get paid I take the bus out to the Baltimore airport to get some of my dollars converted into pounds. They women at the airport all know me by heart now.

FRENCHMAN: How very cosmopolitan of you.

GABBY: Well, I've always liked to find music that nobody else is listening to. Have you ever heard of Los Shakers?

FRENCHMAN: Los Shakers? No.

GABBY: Nobody has! They're from Uruguay, and they're great! They sound like the early Beatles, but, you know, the fast dance music that used to come out of Liverpool! I've been trying to order their singles, but it's hard, because I have to get them from a record store in Montevideo that

does mail orders to the United States, and they only accept the Uruguayan Peso, which the airport has to order special for me. I have a hard time communicating with the record store, because I don't know any Spanish and they don't know any English.

FRENCHMAN: Oh! And do you listen to French music much?

GABBY: A little. I bought a single by Juliette Greco from an English guitarist about nine months ago. She's, what, a ye'ye girl?

FRENCHMAN: Ye'ye, yes, but she's *old* music, man. Before we say adieu, remind me to make a list for you. Do you know Serge Gainsbourg?

GABBY: No.

FRENCHMAN: Oh, man, I think you would really dig him! I tell you what -- we will write down for each other our addresses and when I get home I will send you a few 45s. We can trade, no?

GABBY: Sure!

FRENCHMAN: Cool, baby. You're really nice, eh, you know that, Gabby?

GABBY: No.

FRENCHMAN: Don't say no. I wouldn't lie to you, man. You have a lot of passion for music, and it is exciting to be around your passion, you know?

GABBY: Really?

FRENCHMAN: I am glad we met tonight.

He moves in to kiss her. Gabby pulls away sharply. The Frenchman steps back, eyebrows raised.

FRENCHMAN: No?

GABBY: (*Flustered.*) I'm sorry.

FRENCHMAN: No, no. I shouldn't have assumed. Just because a girl comes with you to your hotel room doesn't mean ...

GABBY: No, it's not that.

FRENCHMAN: Am I too old for you, man?

GABBY: Oh, God, no! It's a relief to be with an older man for once!

FRENCHMAN: Then what?

GABBY: Listen, I've ... um ... been with a lot of men this past year. Musicians. English musicians.

FRENCHMAN: Oh?

GABBY: I've got kind of a reputation among musicians that visit Baltimore. They call me Gabby the Groupie. Pretty much every English singer or guitar player or bass player I've met this year thinks I'm going to go to bed with them. And a lot of them have been right.

FRENCHMAN: It must be exhausting.

GABBY: Ha! You know, it has been! And, listen, some of them have been sort of mean, and some of them have done things they shouldn't have. You know?

FRENCHMAN: I think I do.

GABBY: Maybe I shouldn't be telling you all this. I mean, I went to your movie tonight, and I heard your lecture afterwards, and I thought you seemed interesting. Really, really interesting.

FRENCHMAN: Yes?

GABBY: Oh my God, yes. I mean, I was amazed that you even bothered to come to Baltimore to speak!

FRENCHMAN: Why wouldn't I?

GABBY: Well, it's not exactly New York.

FRENCHMAN: Well, I come from Nancy, which isn't Paris exactly. And I like to go off the beaten path, man. A student group invites me to Baltimore, and they offer to pay for my flight and get me a hotel room, why should I say no?

GABBY: You come from a city called Nancy?

FRENCHMAN: Yes, you know France?

GABBY: No.

FRENCHMAN: It's North, in Lorraine.

GABBY: In Lorraine?

FRENCHMAN: Yes. Does that bemuse you?

GABBY: I went to high school with a Nancy and a Lorraine.

FRENCHMAN: Ah, yes, I see: they are also women's names. Nancy is a good little town. Pierre Schaeffer is from Nancy.

GABBY: Who?

FRENCHMAN: Ah, there is another recording I shall send you. Pierre Schaeffer. Maybe you will like him. Yes, I think you may. He made an entire recording out of sounds of trains. Very abstract, very modern.

GABBY: Billie Holiday was from Baltimore.

FRENCHMAN: Billie Holiday the jazz singer?

GABBY: Yes.

FRENCHMAN: Well, my God. She's more famous than Pierre Schaeffer. So Baltimore is not such a small town.

GABBY: No. I guess not.

FRENCHMAN: So let me be personal, Gabby.

GABBY: All right.

FRENCHMAN: Have you sworn off English boys?

GABBY: Maybe. For a while, anyway. I got to thinking about it and, you know, a lot of these musicians are my age. When I went to England, I visited a lot of their hometowns, and they're even smaller than Baltimore. I thought these English musicians were so sophisticated, but, Jesus Christ, some of them were literally raised on farms. I think they know that American girls are easily impressed by English accents, so they play it up, but it's amazing how small-town some of these boys are. They don't really want to do much except get drunk, pop some pills, and ball.

FRENCHMAN: They have lost some of their appeal, yes?

GABBY: I suppose so. Oh, God, listen to me going on. I must be boring you to tears. You didn't come to Baltimore to listen to me talk.

FRENCHMAN: I don't mind!

GABBY: Come on. You're the artist. I'm just some tramp.

FRENCHMAN: (*Reproachfully.*) Gabby.

GABBY: I am! I'm a tramp! (*Laughs.*) A tramp! Do you know that two months after I lost my virginity, I was sleeping with two men at the same time! I'm a nymphomaniac!

FRENCHMAN: And this makes you laugh?

GABBY: I guess it all seems a little unreal to me. Do you mind if I bore you a little more? I just want to talk about this. My head is just swimming. It's a relief. You don't mind, do you?

FRENCHMAN: Go ahead.

GABBY: Well, you know, when it all started, I really loved it. I felt like I had discovered all these bands, and, the truth is, I was mad about the music. I'm still crazy about it. God damn it, those first Beatles recordings I ever heard were like some unbelievable mystery I had stumbled onto. I used

to run home to see if I had gotten any of the singles I ordered through the mail. When I got them, me and my girlfriend would get together in the basement and listen to them with the lights out, and we'd talk about the songs for hours and try to imagine the bands that recorded them. The basement's like a, you know, a sort of shrine. I've got all my records organized and alphabetized, and the walls are covered with posters, and I have all my magazines and books about music neatly organized on a bookshelf.

FRENCHMAN: Yes?

GABBY: Oh, yes. Me and Midge just obsessed about the music. We'd read about one of the bands in the back pages of a music magazine, or some AM deejay would mention them at 1 in the morning, and we'd get together the next day and discuss what we'd learned, and put the clues together, until we knew the names of all the band members, and where they were from, and how old they were, and we'd just piece together the information like regular detectives. It was our own secret world. And then all of a sudden The Beatles became popular, and then, this past year, suddenly all these bands I discovered just started showing up in Baltimore. And me and Midge decided we were going to sneak into their hotel rooms, or introduce ourselves to them at clubs or bars if we saw them. Because we were their original American patrons, you know? We loved their music before anybody else!

FRENCHMAN: Yes, I understand. You knew that they might want more than just to talk, though, yes?

GABBY: Yeah, but I figured, so what if they wanted to ball? So did I! It was like another brand new discovery for me. I suppose everybody sooner or later goes all the way with their boyfriend, or something like that, but nobody did what we were doing! I mean, we were balling boys we had just met! And not just any boys -- man, you should see the girls go crazy for them at their concerts. They scream and tear their hair! You can't even hardly hear the music because of all the screaming!

FRENCHMAN: I have also seen this. It's pretty wild, man.

GABBY: So here were these boys that all the other girls were just throwing themselves at, and I was getting them alone, and sometimes they had even already heard about me. I mean, it was really exciting. And balling them was great, I guess. I mean, I know girls aren't supposed to like it, but you probably know that we really do.

FRENCHMAN: Ha! Yes!

GABBY: So I guess I felt like I was part of this amazing, international, dangerous world where the usual rules don't apply. And that was fine with me. I don't know why, but I guess I think the rules shouldn't apply. I think a lot of the rules are just crazy. So what if I'm a nymphomaniac? Who am I hurting? Honestly!

FRENCHMAN: So why quit?

GABBY: Well, you're right, it is exhausting. And I guess I don't like every single boy that's in an English band. And I guess they're not all great at balling, and that's disappointing. And not all of them are even that interesting as musicians. I guess that it was a lot more exciting when it was my little

secret, and my own little scene. Now there seems like there are groupies everywhere. I wanted to feel like I was different from them -- like I was somehow special, and not just Gabby the Groupie. But everybody's doing it now, and if I keep doing it, it's not special or secret or even interesting any more. I didn't think the excitement would wear off.

FRENCHMAN: But it did?

GABBY: I guess it did. Faster than I would have expected, too. Maybe my interests have broadened since then. You know, I never saw a French film before yours tonight.

FRENCHMAN: Really?

GABBY: Now I want to see more. All right. I'm done talking. You can throw me out now.

FRENCHMAN: Throw you out! Why?

GABBY: Isn't that what you do when whores have nervous breakdowns in front of you? Just toss them out into the gutter. *(Beat.)* Relax. I'm kidding.

FRENCHMAN: Well, let me tell you something, Gabby. I think those boys are crazy if they don't think you're special, man. Do you believe me when I say that?

GABBY: Well, you don't really know me, do you?

FRENCHMAN: Yeah, but what's to know, man? If I broke into your home and read your diary, would I find out that I'm wrong about you? Would it turn out you aren't inquisitive?

GABBY: Well, no. I suppose I am inquisitive.

FRENCHMAN: Would it turn out you've been lying about your passion for music?

GABBY: No. Actually, if you read my diary, pretty much all you would read about would be music.

FRENCHMAN: So there. You think everybody in the world is curious? You think they all have passion?

GABBY: Maybe not.

FRENCHMAN: It is decidedly uncommon, Gabby. But it's true of you. So these English musicians didn't understand what they were getting in you, did they?

GABBY: I sometimes think that they didn't.

FRENCHMAN: They thought they were just getting a lay from an American bird, right, yes? But you're not just any American bird, are you?

GABBY: You're just flattering me.

FRENCHMAN: Come on, Gabby. Answer the question, man. You're not just any American bird, are you?

GABBY: *(Pauses for a long time before speaking.)* Fuck no.

FRENCHMAN: I don't think so either.

GABBY: You're just saying all this to talk me into going to bed with you, aren't you?

FRENCHMAN: No!

GABBY: Because it's working.

She leans up and kisses him. Then she pulls him over to the bed.

SCENE SEVEN

A song plays: "Les Sucettes" by France Gall. The lights are dim, but visible on the bed is Midge, leaning back, her legs spread in the air above her. A BOY WITH A POMPADOUR kneels in front of her, head buried in her lap. As the song ends, Midge climaxes explosively

MIDGE: Wow!

BOY: How was that?

MIDGE: I mean, honestly, wow.

BOY: You liked it?

MIDGE: Couldn't you tell?

A KNOCK comes at the hotel room door.

MIDGE: Oh, shit!

She rolls off the bed, recovers her underwear, pulls them on.

GABBY: *(From outside.)* Midge?

MIDGE: Just a moment!

The boy rises, retires to the bathroom. Midge scrambles to put herself in order. She crosses to the door, opens it. Gabby peeks in suspiciously.

GABBY: What's been going on here while I was away?

MIDGE: *(Burst out laughing.)* Oh, you know ...

GABBY: Look at you. And with a local boy. Tsk. I brought liquor.

Gabby enters, holding in front of her a paper bag. Midge peeks in.

MIDGE: Ooh. Seagrams and 7-Up. Fun!

GABBY: *(Looking around.)* Jesus. This room. You think we oughta cut notches in the bed post for every guy we balled here?

MIDGE: That wouldn't leave much of the bedpost, would it? *(The pompadoured boy enters.)* Whoops, shhh.

The boy pauses, confused. Gabby crosses to him, gives him a quick hug and a kiss on the cheek.

GABBY: Hiya, sport.

BOY: What were you just talking about?

GABBY: Girlie business.

MIDGE: Nothing.

GABBY: Mix you a Seven-and-Seven?

BOY: Heck yeah.

GABBY: Grab me a few of the plastic cups from the bathroom, would you?

The boy crosses to the bathroom. Gabby and Midge make quick faces at each other. The boy returns with several cups, hands them to Gabby.

GABBY: Ta.

BOY: So when are you girls leaving town, anyway?

MIDGE: Three days.

GABBY: End of the month. God, we still have so much to do.

BOY: Aw.

GABBY: What?

BOY: I wish I' met you sooner.

MIDGE: Isn't that sweet! Maybe you'll come visit us in Brooklyn. It's just a bus ride away.

BOY: How long?

MIDGE: What? Four hours?

GABBY: Depends on whether you stop in Pennsylvania or not.

MIDGE: It's short. Gabby wouldn't mind if you came to visit us, would you?

GABBY: No, I wouldn't mind. *(She hands him a drink.)* It might be nice to have somebody from the old neighborhood swing by.

BOY: Really?

GABBY: Does that surprise you?

BOY: A little.

GABBY: Really? Why?

BOY: I shouldn't like to say.

Midge and Gabby glance at each other.

MIDGE: Well, now you've got our curiosity it, and you simply have to tell us.

BOY: You won't get offended?

MIDGE: We might.

BOY: Aww.

GABBY: But go ahead anyway. I promise we'll forgive you.

BOY: It's just that, well, you have a reputation for not liking Baltimore boys.

Midge and Gabby both laugh noisily.

BOY: What?

GABBY: I can't imagine how we got that reputation, can you, Midge?

MIDGE: People just say the darndest things, now don't they?

BOY: Hey, some on, now. Are you poking fun at me?

MIDGE: Oh, no, gosh!

GABBY: My goodness, no, sport! But tell us more about our, what? Reputation?

BOY: It's just that, well, the guys in the neighborhood say you won't give any of them a second look, on account of you're just mad about English bands.

GABBY: Is that all that they say?

BOY: No. But I wouldn't like to repeat some of the other things that they say.

MIDGE: I think I can imagine some of the things that they say.

GABBY: Although, you know, it didn't occur to me that the local boys were concerned about us at all. I didn't realize we were being talked about, did you, Midge?

MIDGE: I had an inkling.

GABBY: Really?

MIDGE: Yeah. I had somebody shout something at me once.

GABBY: You did? You never told me!

MIDGE: Well, it wasn't a big deal. But I was out shopping with that Welsh boy, and he went into the Owl

Bar on Chase Street because some of his mates were there. Just to say hi for a minute, you know. And while he was in there, some of the boys from our old high school walked by. They didn't look at me as they were walking past, but, when they got to the end of the street, one of them shouted at me.

GABBY: My gosh. What did he shout?

MIDGE: *(Shrugs.)* "Groupie."

GABBY: Boy, that word got around fast. Is that what people say we are, sport? Groupies?

BOY: Yes.

GABBY: What do you think about that?

MIDGE: Oh, Gabby. Maybe we should talk about something else.

GABBY: No, I'm curious. You don't have to tell us if you don't want to, sport. But what did you think when people called us groupies?

BOY: Well, I didn't really know you then, did I? Just from high school, and, you know, you were a few grades ahead of me, so I'd only ever really seen you in the halls.

GABBY: But you must have formulated some sort of opinion, mustn't you?

BOY: I suppose.

GABBY: And what was that opinion?

MIDGE: Honestly! You don't have to tell her if you don't want.

BOY: No, it's okay. I just thought it was a shame.

GABBY: What was a shame?

BOY: That you were only interested in English bands. It seemed like there were some perfectly decent fellows here in Baltimore that you might like if you just gave them a chance.

GABBY: That's sweet, but it's not what I was asking.

MIDGE: Gabby.

GABBY: What did you think we were doing with those English bands, sport?

MIDGE: Seriously, Gabby.

GABBY: What did people say we did with them?

BOY: Well, you know.

GABBY: Yeah. I do know. And what did you think about that?

MIDGE: Come on. For Christ's sake.

GABBY: Well, sport? What did you think about the fact that we were balling all these English bands?

MIDGE: Don't answer her. *(Midge grabs Gabby's arm.)* Gabby, will you please stop this.

GABBY: I'm curious is all.

MIDGE: Well, I'm not. I don't think I want to know the answer to that question. We're having a perfectly nice night and you're ruining it.

GABBY: I'm ruining it?

MIDGE: Yes, Gabby. You are honestly ruining it.

GABBY: *(Startled.)* Sorry. *(To the boy.)* I'm sorry, sport. I was just curious, is all. I didn't mean to ask awkward questions.

The boy shrugs.

GABBY: Anyway, we're here with you, so I guess we're not completely opposed to Baltimore boys, are we?

BOY: I guess not.

GABBY: And you're here with us.

BOY: Yes I am.

GABBY: So maybe I should make us some more drinks, what do we say?

MIDGE: That's more like it.

BOY: Yes, please!

Gabby pours them new cocktails. She hands them around, takes a sip of hers, and then her eyes well up with tears.

GABBY: Excuse me for a moment.

She turns and walks briskly into the bathroom, closes the door behind her.

MIDGE: Oh, for Christ sake's, Gabby! *(She crosses to the bathroom.)* Gabby! Are you all right in there?

GABBY: *(From the bathroom, running water.)* I'll be just a moment. I just need to wash my face!

MIDGE: Come on, Gabby. It's all right.

GABBY: A moment, please!

Midge shrugs, returns to her drink.

BOY: Should I try to talk to her?

MIDGE: No.

BOY: But I upset her.

MIDGE: No you didn't. She's been very emotional since we started planning this move. She'll wash her face, be back out here, and be bright as day. You'll see.

The sound of the running sink in the bathroom stops, and a moment later Gabby emerges, drying her face with a towel.

GABBY: Anyway, where did I put my drink?

Midge and the boy point. She crosses to it, takes it.

GABBY: Well, here's to New York, I guess. *(She raises her cup, and the others do likewise.)*

MIDGE: Here's to department stores.

BOY: Is that what you're going to be doing in New York? Working in a department store?

GABBY: A&S on Fulton Street. We're going to be in the perfume department.

BOY: How did you get the job?

MIDGE: Gabby wrote them a letter. They asked us to come down to interview, so we took a bus down and they liked us, I guess. We spent the rest of the day in Manhattan. Have you been there?

BOY: Not yet.

MIDGE: It was my first time. We went up to the top of the Empire State Building.

GABBY: Just like King Kong.

MIDGE: It was cloudy, so we couldn't see very far. But, what the hell, I guess we'll be able to go to the top of the Empire State Building any time we want. We stopped in Philadelphia on the way home and saw Jimmy Smith perform.

BOY: The jazz guy?

MIDGE: Heck yes. Gabby has been collecting a lot of his records.

GABBY: He plays the Hammond B-3 organ.

MIDGE: Gabby likes it because it sounds like some sort of vitamin.

GABBY: I just don't feel right in the morning until I get a little dose of B-3. We talked with him after the show, which was really fun. Have you heard Jimmy Smith?

BOY: Maybe a little on the radio.

GABBY: I'll give you one of his albums before we leave town. I think you'll like "House Party."

BOY: Really? Thanks!

MIDGE: She's been listening to so much B-3 Hammond organ music that I've started calling her Gabbie the Groovy.

There is a moment of awkward silence.

BOY: What?

GABBY: It's because I used to be called Gabby the Groupie.

MIDGE: Sorry, Gabby. I don't want you to run off to the bathroom again.

GABBY: No, I'm all right. You know, sport, Midge and me never called ourselves groupies. That's just what other people called us. But maybe you're right -- maybe there were some Baltimore boys who we could have spent some more time with. We probably wouldn't have given you the time of day six months ago, and you're all right.

MIDGE: Yeah, we like you just fine.

BOY: I'm glad.

MIDGE: Well, you're interesting, in your own way. You know, we're not usually interested in guys with pompadours, but we saw you at the bus stop reading that magazine. What's it called?

BOY: *Famous Monsters of Filmland.*

MIDGE: We just couldn't stop staring at the cover. It was just gruesome! So Gabby got the idea to follow you. And you went into that toy store, and we just knew we had to follow you in. You didn't even know we were following you, did you?

BOY: *(Squirming.)* No.

MIDGE: And when we saw you buy that plastic model ...

GABBY: Of the Creature from the Black Lagoon!

MIDGE: Well, I guess that's when you noticed us.

BOY: Yes I did.

MIDGE: Oh, we didn't mean to laugh at you.

GABBY: We couldn't help ourselves. I feel badly about it.

MIDGE: Yeah. We talked about it for a few days.

GABBY: We decided that it wasn't particularly weirder to be interested in scary movies than it was to be interested in music that nobody else listens to.

MIDGE: So we decided that if we saw you again, we were going to talk to you.

GABBY: Surprise. You live six blocks from me. I didn't even realize we went to the same school. We must have seen you a million times, but never noticed until we knew you were a ghoul film freak.

MIDGE: So we started seeing you everywhere.

BOY: I know. There were a few weeks when every time I turned around, the two of you were standing behind me, whispering to each other.

MIDGE: Well, sorry if it seemed like we were just following you around. It took us a while to screw up our courage to talk to you.

GABBY: I'm glad we did, though.

MIDGE: I'm really glad we did.

GABBY: (*Glances at Midge.*) I won't ask what she means by that. But, you know, sport, you're a lot of fun. I wouldn't have thought that I would ever wind up in the basement of your house, watching old horror movies on Super-8, but it was a real thrill.

MIDGE: It really was. You know, when Gabby saw all your Super-8 movies, and your posters, and your records of old radio shows, and everything all organized and alphabetized, she looked at me and said, "Oh my God, Midge, he's *just like us*."

GABBY: We hope you don't mind that we've been spending so much time with you in the past few weeks. We're just trying to get as much Sport in as we can before we leave town.

BOY: Oh, heck, I don't mind.

GABBY: I bet you don't.

MIDGE: So you'll definitely have to visit us in New York. We can go up to the top of the Empire State Building together.

GABBY: Just like King Kong.

MIDGE: And they have all these theaters there that run old movies. I'm sure they play old horror movies all the time. And it'll be nice to have someone in town who knows what the hell we're talking about when we talk about Carlin's Amusement Park or pit beef sandwiches.

BOY: They don't have pit beef in New York?

MIDGE: Believe it or not, pit beef seems to be a Baltimore phenomenon.

GABBY: So you will come visit us in New York, won't you, scout?

MIDGE: Say you will.

BOY: Well, sure, I guess.

MIDGE: Great! We'll have a blast. Maybe we'll even all rent a hotel room in Manhattan for a night and drink Seven-and-Sevens, in honor of tonight.

BOY: Why did you want to rent a hotel room tonight anyway?

MIDGE: Well, we didn't just want to rent a hotel room.

GABBY: We wanted to rent this specific hotel room.

BOY: *(Looks around at it, shrugs.)* Why?

The girls explode into explosive laughter.

MIDGE: That, my friend, is a long story.

The lights dim. A song plays "Fings Ain't Wot They Used to Be" by Max Bygraves.

END.